

Content is king, but distribution is queen

Founded in 2021, the CDN Alliance is on a mission to enhance the CDN Industry and work closely with the broadcasting industry to improve delivery of streaming video, writes its chair

Mark de Jong.

Did you know that the CDN industry has existed for more than 25 years? The first CDN (content delivery network) was founded in 1996, called Digital Island, and the current market leader Akamai started in 1998.

Nowadays, CDNs are responsible for the vast majority of all internet traffic globally of which more than 70% is streaming video. Without CDNs, the internet as we know it today, and with that all the services that use streaming video, would not work. It is expected that the total volume of data traffic will continue to grow exponentially for the foreseeable future and that the proportion taken up by streaming video will grow as well.

The CDN industry, however, is very complex, with a wide variety of players, technologies, services, innovations, and relationships, across the domains of delivery, security and edge that are an integral to the activities of every content provider that wants to distribute their video content over the internet. Yet, the CDN sector offered few insights, was not approachable as an industry, and barely cooperated in solving challenges the sector as a whole was facing.

These were a few of the reasons for the CDN Alliance to start late 2021, to become an independent non-profit organization that wants to connect, support, and represent the global CDN industry and CDN community (which is its mission, in fact). Now two years old, the CDN Alliance as an industry forum is well recognized within both the CDN industry as well as



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the broadcasting industry. It executes a variety of activities such as working groups, networking events and platforms, and webinars while working on a variety of projects across the domains of business, technology, and policies in relation to CDNs and content delivery.

WHY COOPERATION IS KEY

With an increasing amount of content distribution for broadcasters being streaming video, more cooperation is needed between the broadcasting and CDN industries. Content is king, but distribution is queen.

Specifically for the broadcast industry, the CDN Alliance has several activities to support further cooperation. During this year's IBC, the biggest broadcasting exhibition in the world, once again in September in Amsterdam, we will hold the third edition of the CDN Alliance

Connect event, with 500+ people attending. It is the biggest networking event at IBC, bridging broadcast and CDN.

The CDN Alliance also has three working groups that are important for broadcast, such as the Dictionary Working Group with a focus on standardizing on terms used in relation to CDN, the Low Latency Working Group building an independent overview of everything on low-latency streaming, and the Traffic Radar Working Group that is building a framework for information

exchange on peak traffic expectations across content providers, CDNs and internet connectivity providers to minimize impact on peak traffic. And there are more working groups in the pipeline.

We are also contributing to the EBU recommendation EBU R 159, titled "Procurement of Interoperable Content Delivery Networks", and are involved in the EU Fair Share Debate, which focuses on potential EU legislation regarding data traffic charges from internet connectivity providers towards CDNs, which would in turn impact costs for broadcasters and the whole CDN ecosystem.

The CDN Alliance works closely with organizations like the EBU, the SVTA, and Greening of Streaming to further bolster cooperation that is important for the broadcasting industry. Cooperation is key and of benefit to both the broadcasting industry and CDN industry. Remember: content is king, but distribution is queen.